1990, Prime Minister said cooperation among countries of the region should be forged in a manner that serves the best interests of all the countries involved and that the precise way in which we achieve this will be a test of our organisational capabilities At the concluding Session of the Summit, Prime Minister remarked that the unison of thought, concern, desire and confidence for bringing peace amongst SAARC countries is what will inspire and strengthen our future course PM said that at the next SAARC Summit it will be possible to give a message of mutual goodwill and a cooperation, love and affection, and brotherhood to the whole world.

(b) and (c) During their meeting in Male on 22 November 1990, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan agreed that all differences, should be resolved peacefully and through dialogue It was also agreed that the Third Round of Foreign Secretary level talks would take place in Islamabad. Prime Minister Chandra Sekhar reiterated India's position on the question of Pakistan's intereference in our internal affairs The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan agreed to remain in touch with each other

The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan have since met in Islamabad from December 17—20, 1990 In order to carry the bilateral dialogue forward and also to reduce the tension in our bilateral relationship, it was agreed to resume discusions over a wide range of bilateral issues.

During his meeting with the President of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Chandra Sekhar expressed his willingness to extend all possible cooperation to Bangladesh and hope that the two countries would have the best of relations Since then following the resignation of President Ershad, Government have welcomed the movement towards restoration of democracy in Bangladesh and look forward to working closely with a democratically elected Government in Bangladesh

(d) Government continue to accord high priority to strengthening our relations with neighbouring countries and will follow a dynamic policy of interaction with leaders of countries in South Asia

Improving the Indo-Pak relations

727 SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) whether the Prime Minister has recently held discussions with the Prime Minister of Pakistan at Mals to take fresh measures to minimise tension between the two countries,

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held and

(c) what fresh measures have been taken/proposed to be taken to minimise tension between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir The Prime Minister of India and Pakistan met in the Maldives on 22nd November, 1990 It was agreed that all differences would be resolved peacefully and through dialogue, and that the Third Round of Foreign Secretary level talks would take place in Islamabad from 18—20 December, 1990 when dates for the next meeting of the Joint Commission, and for the continuation of discussions on Tulbal Project and Sir Creek would be determined The two Prime Ministers agreed to remain in touch with each other.

(c) Pursuant to the meeting of the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries met in Islamabad from 18—20 December 1990 and, among others, agreed to the following measures designed to reduce tension between the two countries·

— The talks on the boundary in the Sir Creek area will be resumed in early February, 1991;

— Discussion on Tulbal Project will be held soon thereafter;

— The Directors General of Military operations of the two countries will remain in regular weekly contact on the hotline;

— The Sub-commission of the Joint Indo-Pakistan Commission will meet at an appropriate time;

— The Instruments of Ratification of the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities will be exchanged in January, 1991;

— The Foreign Secretaries will meet again in New Delhi towards the end of February, 1991.

Streamlining of postal services in the country

728. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to streamline the postal services throughout the country and also propose to remove subsidy on postal services;

(b) if so, the details of the steps Government propose to contemplate to streamline the postal services, and

(c) what is the extent to which the postal services would be improved by the end of the current financial year?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PRAKASH): and No, Sir.

India has the biggest postal network in the world and the expansion of this network has taken place as a result of the seven five year plans. The system is already streamlined But in a network of 1.47.663 post offices and 5,00,890 letter boxes involving about 3,00,000 regular full time staff and about 3,00,000 part time staff and the dependence of the Department on railways, roadways and airways combined with the increasing density of population multi stroved buildings coming up in major cities and repid rise of traffic has created a set of problems which has resulted in slower delivery of mail. One of the contributing factors has also been the ban on creation of posts as also the inability of the Department to introduce any measures for modernisation and mechanisation due to shortage of resources and resistance from the staff.

It is in this context that the report of the Committee of Excellence is being processed in which a number of proposals have been made which are under active consideration. One of the proposals relates to removal of subsidy on the postal services over a period of 5 years because the committee felt that until the Department can generate adequat resources, it may not be able to make the required investments in modernisation.

(b) Some proposals made by the Committee relating to introduction of technology are under consideration

(c) the steps that are being taken to improve the postal services during the current financial year are to optimise the use of existing assets and resources and improve the working to the extent, we receive the cooperation of the staff in improving productivity. To reduce the dissatisfaction of the staff, a few proposals to improve the terms and conditions are under consideration

Modern Technology in Road Building

729. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has underlined the need for absorption of modern technology in building roads in the country;